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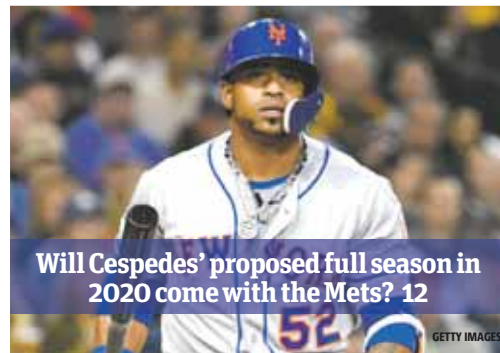
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Weekend, December 20-22, 2019 metro.us | t: MetroNew



'THE WITCHER' WOMEN

Actors discuss Netflix's riveting new fantasy series. 9



Will Cespedes' proposed full season in 2020 come with the Mets? 12

NYC 'Lion Lady' skips court date; arrest warrant issued. 6

SUNDOWN FOR 'STAR WARS' SAGA

Daisy Ridley on how the character of Rey changed her life, and what's next after 'The Rise of Skywalker,' which opens in theaters today. 10

LUCASFILMS / DISNEY

THINGS TO KNOW

Dogged senator will conceivably be in his element.

As President Donald Trump girds for a U.S. Senate impeachment trial, he is entrusting the future of his presidency to someone widely known as a shrewd negotiator who also plays hardball politics at a level unusual even by Washington standards.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a self-proclaimed "Grim Reaper" who long has stood in the way of Democrats' initiatives, is embracing that role as he suits up for an impeachment trial next month.

Even before it has gotten off the ground, McConnell, the top Republican in Congress, has said there is no chance Trump, his party's leader, will be convicted on charges that he abused his office and obstructed a congressional investigation into his conduct. On Wednesday, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives formally impeached Trump.

In coming days, McConnell is expected to engage Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer in negotiations on how Trump's Senate trial should be conducted, including on the question of whether witnesses should be called to testify. The two leaders declined to comment for this story.

Trump must now depend on 'Grim Reaper' McConnell to save him in Senate trial



U.S. President Donald Trump listens to a question from reporters next to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) as he arrives for a closed Senate Republican policy lunch on Capitol Hill in Washington on March 26, 2019. REUTERS

When McConnell takes a stand, he is difficult to move, said Dick Durbin, the Senate's number two Democrat.

"He only moves if he's personally concerned about his own re-election or the election of his majority," Durbin told reporters on Tuesday, while noting, "2020's an election year."

Trump, 73, regularly telephones McConnell, according to a former aide to the senator. On the surface, the 77-year-old six-term senator from Kentucky could not be more different from Trump.

Trump, a former reality television star and

"As [McConnell] sometimes says, he likes to allow himself the luxury of the unexpressed thought."

Rohit Kumar, former McConnell deputy chief of staff

real estate entrepreneur, rarely misses opportunities to boast about himself and attack opponents or critics with Twitter posts.

The laconic McConnell eschews Twitter, sometimes sits silently listening in meetings, according to those who have attended, and can repel reporters' questions by refusing to utter a syllable.

"As he sometimes says, he likes to allow himself

the luxury of the unexpressed thought," said Rohit Kumar, who worked for McConnell from 2007-2013 and was a deputy chief of staff.

Trump and McConnell do share some traits, even as the senator tries to tamp down the president's inclination for high drama. Both seize key moments to flex their muscles in a way opponents say unduly stretches the

bounds of their powers.

Trump, for example, funded construction of some U.S.-Mexico border wall by taking money already dedicated to other programs, an unusual step by a president in defiance of Congress.

In February, 2016, McConnell enraged Democrats by refusing to consider then-President Barack Obama's choice of federal Judge Merrick Garland to serve on the Supreme Court following the death of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia. Had Garland been confirmed by the Republican-controlled Senate, he would have tipped the court in a liberal direction.

For all of his legendary doggedness, Democrats think McConnell at times can be pressured into bending. Earlier this year, for example, he chafed when Democrats branded him as "Moscow Mitch" for blocking additional election security money. Shortly afterward, the added funds flowed through the Senate.

Brian Fallon, a former aide to Schumer, said in past negotiations, McConnell has shown an "intricate knowledge" of congressional procedure and the ability to cut deals with Democrats, but in a way that they get blamed if voters do not respond

well.

Kumar said that McConnell's reserved style, punctuated by extra pauses of silence, can force those sitting across the negotiating table to fill the uncomfortable void by tipping their hands.

People are "endlessly vexed by McConnell's patrician, silent nature. He doesn't need to fill the silence with his own voice," Kumar said.

McConnell has had frosty relations with Schumer and his predecessor, Harry Reid, a former boxer.

One former senior Senate Democratic aide said that when Reid and McConnell were thrown together in a room, small talk about baseball was the only "safe" territory for two men who never found a path to a good working relationship.

McConnell already has telegraphed that if negotiations with Schumer sputter, he could embark on another power play by finding 51 votes - a simple majority of the Senate - to end the trial in its early stages and acquit Trump without witness testimony.

Both McConnell and Schumer served in the Senate during Bill Clinton's 1999 impeachment trial - McConnell voted to convict. REUTERS

Three die in protests against new citizenship law in India

2 Three people died of injuries sustained in intensifying protests against a new citizenship law in India on Thursday with thousands taking to the streets nationwide in defiance of temporary bans on public gatherings. Some protesters clashed with police over the law, passed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government, that critics say is discriminatory against Muslims

and undermines India's secular constitution. Police detained hundreds of people in the capital Delhi and the southern city of Bengaluru and shut down the internet in some districts to help pre-empt large planned protests. College students, academics, minority Muslim groups and opposition parties have been prominent in an escalating series of street protests now in their second week.

REUTERS

Netflix says 'Klaus' is a hit with nearly 30 million views

3 Netflix Inc.'s animated holiday movie "Klaus" has been watched in nearly 30 million households worldwide during its first month, landing among the streaming service's most-watched original movies, according to data the company provided to Reuters. "Klaus," a story of how Santa came to be, is Netflix's first original animated film and part of an effort to build a library of family program-

ming as it competes with new streaming rivals including Walt Disney Co. Netflix only selectively releases viewership figures for programming it considers a hit, and the numbers are not verified by a third party. The company counts a view when an account streams at least 70% of a movie. "Klaus" has attracted high repeat viewing that is not included in the nearly 30 million figure, Netflix said. REUTERS

Vaping-related deaths rise to 54, hospitalizations to 2,506

4 U.S. health officials said on Thursday two more deaths occurred since last week from a mysterious respiratory illness tied to vaping, taking the total toll to 54. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also reported 97 more hospitalized cases from 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories, as of Dec. 17. The number of people hospitalized now stands at 2,506. The deaths have



been confirmed in 27 states and the District of Columbia, and the CDC said more deaths are under investigation. REUTERS



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Director Tom Hooper, singer Taylor Swift and actress Jennifer Hudson arrive for the world premiere of the movie "Cats" in Manhattan, New York on December 16, 2019. REUTERS

Lots of fur, few purrs as critics claw 'Cats' musical film

"From 'cat-tastrophic' to 'the worst thing to happen to cats since dogs.'" — "Cats" reviews

A film adaptation of hit stage musical "Cats" hits cinemas this week but critics have not exactly been purring with delight.

From "cat-tastrophic" to "the worst thing to happen to cats since dogs," most reviews have been far from kind, with disapproval ranging over the star-studded cast's computer-generated furry looks, oversized sets and plot.

As of Thursday, 18% of 97 reviews collected on the Rotten Tomatoes website were positive.

Featuring Taylor Swift, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Jennifer Hudson, Idris Elba and James Corden, "Cats" sparked some negative reaction over the characters' appearances when its trailer dropped in July.

Adapted from composer Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical and directed by Oscar winner Tom Hooper, the movie shows the actors' faces while their bodies appear to be covered in fur.

"The real issue is the distracting and disturbing 'digital fur technology,'" Tara Brady wrote for The Irish Times. "Every time 'Cats' settles into an admittedly avant-garde shape, an ear twitches or a tail flicks and you're back thinking about how ghastly the actual cats look."

Variety's Peter Debruge called it an "outlandishly tacky interpretation."

"From the first shot ... to the last, 'Cats' hurts the eyes and, yes, the ears, as nearly all the musical numbers ... have been twisted into campy, awards-grubbing cameos

for big-name stars in bad-CG cat drag."

The Hollywood Reporter's David Rooney dubbed the film "cat-tastrophic."

"In addition to the generally off-putting appearance of the cats, the proportions are all wrong with respect to their surrounding environment," he said. "Sometimes they go from appearing minuscule to giant-size within the same scene."

Based on the poems by T.S. Eliot, "Cats" follows the Jellicles group of felines, who annually decide who will ascend to the Heaviside Layer. The musical opened in London in 1981, becoming one of the longest-running shows in the West End and Broadway.

Hooper, known for "The King's Speech" and "Les Misérables," said he worked on the characters' feline designs after initial reaction to the trailer. At Monday's premiere, he told Variety he had completed the movie only the previous day.

"I finished it at 8 a.m. yesterday after 36 hours in a row. I just put the finishing touches on. So, I'm very happy to be here with it fully finished," Variety quoted Hooper saying.

Several critics praised the film's choreography and performances.

USA Today's Brian Truitt called "Cats" an "utterly absurd yet oddly charming movie" while Deadline's Pete Hammond said it was a "welcome treat this holiday season."

"The strength of this version is in its actors, and they are all perfectly chosen and deliver on all four paws," Hammond wrote. REUTERS

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The Bronx Zoo said it has "zero tolerance" for the woman's behavior, though it's unclear if she will face any charges.

IMAGE AND VIDEO COURTESY HERNAN REYNOSO
"REAL SOBRINO," A DOMINICAN URBAN ARTIST.

Arrest warrant issued for Bronx Zoo's 'Lion Queen'

A woman who was caught on video taunting a lion inside its enclosure missed her court date.



BECCA GLASSER-BAKER
Rebecca.Glasser@metro.us

A local woman who appeared to taunt a male lion after she climbed into his enclosure at the Bronx Zoo has a warrant out for

her arrest.

ABC reports Myah Autry failed to appear in court last week for her criminal trespass case.

Autry faces charges for entering the lion and giraffe exhibits at the Bronx Zoo earlier this year.

Officials said there was a moat with a 14-foot-drop between where Autry and the lion stood.

A bystander snagged video of the shocking incident and shared it on social media. The

video, which showed Autry dancing around, went viral.

Autry's previous court arraignment drew much public attention. As Metro previously reported, during the arraignment, Autry proclaimed her devotion to Allah and Jehovah. Outlets reported that she kept interrupting the judge and saying, "All praises go to Jah and Jehovah!"

She also expressed that she was a "Black Israelite."

MTA will spend \$250 million to hire 500 transit cops

The MTA on Wednesday voted to spend \$250 million of its budget on 500 new transit officers.

MTA chairman and CEO Pat Foye said more law enforcement is needed in the subway due to a spike in robberies, hate crimes, harassment and assault of employees, NBC reports.

"We believe that's going to help us provide a safe and secure environment for our customers and our employees and that's our focus," Foye said.

The new police officers will be working under the MTA, not the NYPD. However, both organizations will continue to work closely together.

NBC reports there are currently 783 MTA officers and additional officers will help fill vacant roles.



PIKABY

They will also fill positions that opened due to 200 recent retirements.

The new cops will reportedly patrol the LIRR and Metro-North.

ABC reports Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez penned a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo asking him to reroute the money to the bus and subway service. It was reported that Foye sent a response stating, "We will not engage in politics

when it comes to public safety."

Foye continued, "New Yorkers deserve to have reliable service and feel secure on our system. These priorities are one and the same. We are seeing vast improvements in subway on-time performance, but hate crimes have risen more than 50 percent, robbery is up 11.5 percent, aggravated harassment is up 167 percent, and the TWU has reported an increase in assaults on workers of 39 percent. Adding additional uniformed police officers across the MTA will help ensure safety and quality of life for our eight million daily customers."

This is part of a four-year plan that aims to avoid budget-driven service cuts.

BECCA GLASSER-BAKER

Doctors Urge Knee Pain Sufferers

“Don’t Get ANY Surgery Until You See This...”

After Years Of Intense Study, NYC Medical Clinic Finally Reveals It's Best “Treatment Formula” For Helping Knee Arthritis Sufferers... Especially When So Many Other Treatments Have Failed

NEW YORK CITY - If you are even remotely interested in discovering how the latest scientific discoveries can possibly help your knee pain... then this is going to be the most exciting information you ever read.

Here is why: Knee pain can not only be brutal... it's complex. In other words, it's not a simple, easy fix.

But I'm sure you already know that. Or you wouldn't be reading this.

That's the bad news.

Now for some good news...

Over the years, *NYC Pain MD* has treated countless knee pain sufferers. And in that time have been able to constantly improve.

And we have come up with a treatment formula that we have found works best and helps the most patients.

This formula has reduced or even eliminated the pain in many. Some were scheduled for knee replacement surgery and felt good enough to cancel their surgery.

It's amazing when patients who were once in excruciating pain... start feeling better. And start walking again. And playing golf. Or tennis. And finally getting their lives back.

Especially when they had gone to other doctors and tried so many other things.

So many had given up hope.

Sound familiar? If it does... check this out...

The Treatment Formula

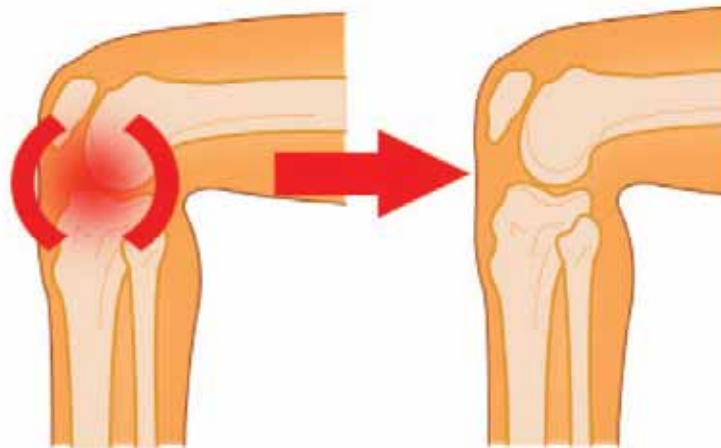
While I can't give you the entire treatment formula here (there is not enough space and WAY too complicated) I can give you the basics. And more important... I can tell you what it might be able to do for YOU.

The first and most important part of the formula is: **PATIENT SELECTION.**

This means, *NYC Pain MD* has a detailed screening process to tell who is most likely to be helped by their treatments... and who is not.

If you qualify, you have the opportunity to move forward and experience the worldclass treatments that *NYC Pain MD* offers.

If you do not, *NYC Pain MD* will tell you what they think your best options are and help



NYC Pain MD “Treatment Formula” A protocol of advanced medical treatments that has already helped thousands.

you find the right doctor for you.

If you qualify, *NYC Pain MD* offers some of the most advanced medical treatments available today all using the most advanced imaging technology including:

- Viscosupplementation (gel injections)
- Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP)
- Stem Cell Therapy (Lipogems)
- Genicular Knee Block
- And more.

Once again, there is not enough space to go into detail about all these procedures... but here are some things you **MUST KNOW...**

Viscosupplementation is where a doctor introduces a gel-like medicine directly into the joint space. This helps to lubricate the joints often relieving some, most or even all of your pain. Results can last for 6 months to several years.

Many have had these treatments *without* good results. However, *NYC Pain MD* feels this is because doctors often do these “gel injections” without advanced imaging to guide them. Research shows they will often miss the joint. If the joint is missed... it is impossible for the treatment to work.

NYC Pain MD has spared no expense and used advanced imaging to guide the injections assuring the medicine gets into the joint. We frequently get results when this treatment was a failure done elsewhere.

The second thing you must know is... our treatment plans are custom made for every patient. And we have all these treatments

offered in the same place. Many times you will get the best results from multiple treatments. At *NYC Pain MD* your doctors will all be there and will all know each other and you and your case. They work together and give you the best treatments and care without you having to go anywhere else.

The ability to select the right patients and then have the potential to give them any or all of these treatments... with all the necessary medical technology... under one roof... has allowed *NYC Pain MD* to get better results than they thought possible.

Here's What You Should Do Next

If you suffer with knee pain... and any of this made sense to you... *NYC Pain MD* would like to offer you a No-cost screening. That screening is the first step in our “Treatment Formula.”

You will get to see a doctor and ask any questions you have. Your doctor will take the first steps to see if you qualify for treatments and give you recommendations.

The best thing is... you will finally get direction. You will know what's going on and what is your best course of action... step-by-step. The treatments will be explained in detail and you will breathe a big sigh of relief finally knowing what's going on and what can or cannot be done.

There is so much we want to say to help you... but I'm out of space. Give us a call at **877-296-6310** and take the first step. That step is free without obligation.



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Fri 12/20

Featured



The Many Sounds of Christmas
@ 7pm / \$25-\$35
New York's holiday tradition returns with our signature musical journey, The Many Sounds of Christmas, with the Salvatones, The New York Virtuosi, and the angelic tones of The Salvatones Young Voices! St. Malachy's The Actors' Church, 239 West 49th Street, New York. 812-219-7814

Featured



Harlem Jazz Series - T. K. Blue
@ 7pm / \$21.83
T.K. Blue began his life in music by playing trumpet from ages 8 to 10, then switching to drums for a year. Come and see Mr. Smooth play his saxophone and don't be late. The church will be on fire! Greater Calvary Baptist Church, 55 West 124th Street, New York. 212-662-7779

Michael Blackson
@ 8pm / \$45-\$85
Sony Hall, 235 W 46th Street, New York

The Great Divorce
@ 8pm
Theatre Row - Theatre Three, 410 West 42nd Street, New York

Oz Noy
@ 8:30pm
Iridium Jazz Club, 1650 Broadway, New York

Sat 12/21

2019 WBB Breaking Sports Championships
@ 3pm / \$20-\$98
The Secret is Out! Breaking has gone extreme and is now an Olympic Sport due to premiere at the 2024 Olympics in Paris. BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers Street, New York. 866-255-5990

Featured



Sombbrero NYC Santa Bash Party 2019
@ 5pm
Sombbrero NYC, 303 W 48th Street, New York City

Editor's Pick

Nyc Santa Midtown Pub Crawl 2019 Only \$15
@ 5pm
NYU and Various Venues Throughout NYC, 60 Washington Square S, New York

Novotel Rooftop Santa Bash Party 2019
@ 5pm
Novotel, 226 West 52nd Street, New York

Judgment Day
@ 8pm
Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Armory, New York

Sun 12/22

Featured



CHANUKAH EXPERIENCE: DON'T BURN THE LATKES
@ 11am / Free
Virtual Reality Chanukah Experience Dekalb Market Hall, 445 Albee Square West, Brooklyn

Gazillion Bubble Show
@ 12pm
New World Stages - Stage 2, 340 West 50th Street, New York

Editor's Pick

The Rock and Roll Playhouse plays Motown for Kids Holiday Celebration ft. Music of Diana, Stevie, Gladys, the Temptations and More!
@ 12pm / \$13
Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave, Brooklyn

Featured



The Play That Goes Wrong
@ 2pm
New World Stages - Stage 4, 340 West 50th Street, New York

Voss Events Drag Brunch
@ 2pm / \$24.95-\$34.95
Iridium, 1650 Broadway, New York

Jersey Boys
@ 2pm
New World Stages - Stage 1, 340 West 50th Street, New York

Mon 12/23

The Play That Goes Wrong
@ 7pm
New World Stages - Stage 4, 340 West 50th Street, New York

Mingus Big Band
@ 7:30pm / \$30
Jazz Standard, 116 East 27th St., New York

Featured



Harry Connick, Jr. - A Celebration of Cole Porter
@ 7pm / \$105.50-\$235.50
Nederlander Theatre, 208 West 41st Street, New York

All Star Stand Up Comedy
@ 9:45pm
Greenwich Village Comedy Club, 99 Macdougall St, New York

Tue 12/24

Featured



Harlem Gospel Holiday Celebration
@ 11am / \$21.83
The holiday season is in full swing and no better place to enjoy it than with us at our Harlem Holiday Gospel Celebration. This is one-hour of hand clapping, foot-stomping live Gospel in Harlem. Mt Olivet Baptist Church, 201 Malcolm X Boulevard, New York. 212-662-7779

Featured



Slavas Snowshow
@ 2pm
Stephen Sondheim Theatre, 124 W 43rd St, New York

Point Royal at The Diplomat Beach Resort's Christmas Eve Offerings
@ 5:30pm
Geoffrey Zakarian's Point Royal at The Diplomat Beach Resort's Christmas Eve Offerings Point Royal at The Diplomat Beach Resort, 3555 South Ocean Drive, Hollywood, FL 33019. 212-988-7705

Editor's Pick

A Traditional Christmas Eve Comedy Show
@ 7pm
Broadway Comedy Club, 318 W. 53rd St, New York City

Editor's Pick

Yo La Tengo
@ 7:30pm
Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St., New York

Perfect Crime
@ 8pm / \$60
The Theater Center, 210 W. 50th Street, New York

Wed 12/25

Featured



Harlem Gospel Holiday Celebration
@ 11am / \$21.83
The holiday season is in full swing and no better place to enjoy it than with us at our Harlem Holiday Gospel Celebration. This is one-hour of hand clapping, foot-stomping live Gospel in Harlem. Mt Olivet Baptist Church, 201 Malcolm X Boulevard, New York. 212-662-7779

Klez for Kids concert
@ 12pm / \$10-\$14
The perfect thing to do when the city quiets down for Christmas - gather the whole family at Eldridge Street for this joyous musical celebration! Museum at Eldridge Street, 12 Eldridge Street, New York. 212-219-0888

Jazz Standard Closed for Christmas
@ 7:30pm
Jazz Standard, 116 East 27th St., New York

Featured



Christmas All Star Stand Up Comedy
@ 9pm
Broadway Comedy Club, 318 W. 53rd St, New York City

Jazz Standard Closed for Christmas
@ 9:30pm
Jazz Standard, 116 East 27th St., New York

Thu 12/26

All Star Stand Up Comedy In Our Cellar At Greenwich Village
@ 7:30pm
Greenwich Village Comedy Club, 99 MacDougal Street, New York

Discover Davinci & Michelangelo
@ 8pm
St. Luke's Theatre, 308 West 46th Street, New York

Janeane Garofalo, Jordan Carlos, No Two Drink Minimum - Exclusive Spec
@ 8pm
EastVille Comedy Club - Brooklyn, 487 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn

Editor's Pick

Strawberry Fields
@ 8:30pm
Iridium Jazz Club, 1650 Broadway, New York

Fri 12/27

An Insomniac's Food & Cocktail Crawl NYC
@ 12am / \$125
Dec 27th - Dec 26th
One Five One, 151 W 42nd St, New York

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LIFESTYLE

In the world of monsters and magic...

Anya Chalotra as Yennefer.
KATALIN VERMES/NETFLIX

The women of "The Witcher" talk bringing a new life to the wildly popular series.

MOLLY GIVEN

There has been anticipation surrounding the release of Netflix's latest fantasy series "The Witcher," and it's easy to see why. With a variety of novels, short stories and video games surrounding the mystical world of monsters and magic, a large fan base has already accumulated—so much so that it is even said to rival the dedicated audience of HBO's "Game of Thrones." The story written on paper and shown throughout the virtual world of gaming follows Geralt, a monster hunter who was trained and mutated at a young age to hunt and slay the evil creatures in his world, and Superman himself, Henry Cavill, has stepped into those coveted shoes. But what's interesting specifically about Netflix's adaptation of "The Witcher" is the cardinal presence of the women in the story, and quite specifically the developed backstory of Yennefer (Anya Chalotra), a sorceress who's journey shifts as she begins to discover her powers and Ciri (Freya Allan), a princess who must find her own strength after suffering a devastating loss.

Both Chalotra and Allan sat down with Metro to discuss their characters' journeys, the pressure they felt taking on iconic roles and why the women of "The Witcher" have brought a new life to this cabalistic series.

Was there pressure taking on such iconic characters? Also how much inspiration did you take from the book?

AC: For me, I just turned away from that pressure of playing such an iconic

character and focused on the script that we had, that was our bible. We knew we were basing the series on the novels, but we were doing something quite different with developing Yennefer's back story and meeting Yennefer and Ciri independently from Geralt's story.

What do you specifically like about your characters?

FA: I love how Ciri is not afraid to speak out — she really vocalizes her opinion and values her voice, she uses it. She also realizes the power of choice, which we always say is kind of a running theme throughout the entire show. I just love how stubborn, feisty and curious she is, she always wants to learn. I can really relate to that as well.

AC: I learned a lot from Yennefer — but I think we connect a lot through our fearlessness. She's stubborn and fierce and she's really magical — she has powers and it was so exciting to act that fantasy element out. But also, she uses her insecurities and what she thinks is her weakness as a strength, it becomes her strength and makes her powerful because of everything she suffered for as a child.

Yennefer goes on quite the journey and transforms throughout the series, was it difficult shifting mindsets?

AC: It was my greatest challenge yet as an actor, and one that I loved as well. I have to play her from age fourteen to someone who is in her late 70s, but not only that, she has a deformed spine and a jaw abnormality. I have to figure out how I can best bring that truth to the screen so people can look past that and see what's happening and see what's happening emotionally for her. I was worried that I wouldn't be

able to pull that off, but I tried to not make it too cerebral and just trust my instincts, and also trust the people around me and their advice and direction as well.

It seemed that with Ciri you had to do a lot of filming on your own, what were some of the challenges of acting solo?

FA: It was really challenging, right at the start of filming it was the opposite. I was surrounded by people all of the time, we had a real camaraderie and I loved it. Then suddenly, it all went and I would come in and sit on my own — it was a little sad, but I think it also really helped with the character because I went through the same thing she did, just not with the same intensity. We both lost people in a sense — I had made such great friends and suddenly they were all gone and I was on my own, and that's what she goes through, just more extreme.

This fantasy genre is wildly popular, but what would you say sets "The Witcher" apart from other films or series along the same lines?

FA: I think with regards to the women in it, what's so great is that our stories are very independent of Geralt's. They're not attached to his, we have our own viewpoints. Also, the women are strong, but not because of a man, which is often quite rare to find in the fantasy genre.

Overall why do you think people feed into the fantasy genre so much?

AC: I think it's escapism, you want to escape into a different world. Everything is so serious around us, and fantasy is a place where anyone and anything can exist. It's magic. "The Witcher" drops today on Netflix.

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DISNEY

“‘The Rise of Skywalker’ is a great tribute to Leia” DAISY RIDLEY

In the new film directed by J. J. Abrams, English actress Daisy Ridley plays Rey, a young woman with great physical skills, who is proud, responsible and has great leadership qualities. In ‘Episode IX,’ the scavenger says goodbye to Leia Organa, the Force-sensitive leading general of the Resistance, played by Carrie Fisher, who died in December 2016 and appears through the use of unreleased footage from ‘The Force Awakens’ and ‘The Last Jedi.’ Metro chatted with the 27-year-old Ridley to learn more. **MARÍA ESTÉVEZ, MWN**

So, the Daisy & Rey journey already lasts for 5 years.

I actually think it has been six because I started auditioning when I was 20 and I got the role when I was 21 ... it's been a while.

Did you change a lot since then?

I think I'm pretty serious but also quite silly, which is a side of Rey we haven't seen yet, but there is a bit more of it in this film. I definitely don't have the struggles that Rey has, because my actions don't determine the fate of the galaxy. I do try to do the right thing, though.

I do my own stunts, so physically, I guess, we're pretty similar. I mean, I think she's great, I really love her as a character. So I think if there are any similarities, I'm thrilled with that. It's not like I'm trying to run away from that.

This role has placed you

into the spotlight. It must have been hard.

It was hard, I love privacy. And then everything suddenly happened. And then my parents' names are on the internet and my sister's and my favorite meal. That was quite strange. And at the time it didn't feel that strange. And now I think, ‘Oh my God, you can't take any of that back, that's just out there.’ So that has been a shift. But weirdly, it has become easier, as it now comes in waves. So, it's fine. I'm also pretty strict with my boundaries.

If you could talk with

yourself from five years ago, would you say ‘everything is going to be okay?’

I would say that. I also have realized I am quite a control freak. So I would say like, ‘It's okay, you are still in control of yourself, your reactions. And, also, enjoy it.’ Because I did enjoy it. I'm having such a great time and I wish I'd enjoyed it slightly more and got less stressed about it.

Do you experience anxiety as there is no other “Star Wars” movie now on your schedule?

There's definitely a scheduling hole in my life.

I'm not doing anything after Christmas. It is fun until the film comes out. And then I'm going to ask, ‘Oh, my God, what now?’ I'm prepared for that.

Will you miss “Star Wars?”

Yeah. It's a great story, but I'll also really miss working with people that I really love and I felt this comfortable with. I'm very grateful for how it's been. But you just have to go on, life takes turns, you know. And I know that it's not like I'm never going to see these people ever again.

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I have this one light fixture in my apartment that always goes out no matter how old the light bulb is. I've had my super come to try and fix it multiple times and nothing seems to work. The light bulbs just keep frying once I turn the lightswitch on! Maybe it's haunted or something?

Sarah, Metro US reader

metro.us/horoscopes

- Aries** Talk to friends and relatives, and make plans for the holidays. Don't be fooled by bargains.
- Taurus** Be content with the way you look and be confident in the way you present who you are and what you have to offer.
- Gemini** Keep moving until you complete everything on your list. A change regarding a rule or regulation should not be ignored.
- Cancer** Emotional meddling will take place if you let an outsider interfere in your personal affairs.
- Leo** Take part in an exciting challenge, but don't take a risk that could jeopardize you physically.
- Virgo** Let your actions speak for you. Helping others is admirable, but remember to put your loved ones first. A positive attitude and change at home.
- Libra** If you ask friends and family to help with chores, you will finish them faster, leaving time for a little festive cheer.
- Scorpio** Reconnecting with someone from your past will confuse you. Don't believe everything you hear.
- Sagittarius** If you offer your best effort when helping someone in need, favors will be granted to you in return.
- Capricorn** If you want something, go get it. Don't wait for things to come to you; bring about change.
- Aquarius** An in-depth conversation will lead to valuable information and a clear conscience when you must make a decision.
- Pisces** A financial gain or gift is heading your way. Focus on home, family and togetherness. Make plans that will encourage short trips, physical activity and working with others to make life better.

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SPORTS



Yoenis Cespedes has played in just 119 games over the past three seasons with the Mets. GETTY IMAGES

Mets' Cespedes hints at playing full season in 2020

The Mets slugger made it known that he is looking to play at least 140 games next year.



JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

Chavez, which showed Cespedes taking batting practice.

The 34-year-old has played in a combined 119 games over the past three seasons. He missed the entire 2019 campaign after fracturing his ankle during a fall at his Florida ranch, which required surgery.

The mystery of Yoenis Cespedes' playing status for the 2020 season is slowly becoming worthy of a Hardy Boys novel.

While New York Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen remains unsure if his team will receive the services of the slugging outfielder this upcoming spring, Cespedes is indicating an entirely different story.

ESPN baseball analyst Eduardo Perez — who was up for the Mets' managerial job before losing out to Carlos Beltran — stated on MLB Network Thursday morning that Cespedes told him he plans to play in at least 140 games in 2020 while smacking 40-plus home runs (h/t Mike Silva).

This comes a month following a since-deleted video posted by Mets instructor Endy

It was a disastrous turn of events after undergoing surgery in 2018 to remove calcification in both of his heels, which impacted his running style and was believed to play a role in nagging hamstring and quad issues.

The lack of durability forced the Mets to amend the final year of Cespedes' contract last week ahead of the 2020 season. Originally set to make \$29.5 million in the final year of his four-year, \$110 million deal, the outfielder will be making less than \$10 million before hitting free agency.

Van Wagenen was expected to take the money saved and reallocate it toward a more pressing need within the roster — whether that be in the bullpen or center field — but he has yet to do so.

A healthy Cespedes would create more of a logjam in the Mets' outfield. They are currently trying to balance the playing times of Michael Conforto, Brandon Nimmo, Jake Marisnick, JD Davis, Jeff McNeil and Dominic Smith — though the latter three are natural infielders.

Conforto is slated as the everyday right fielder while Nimmo could be the main man in center and backed up by Marisnick if the Mets don't trade him this winter.

If Cespedes truly is available for 140-plus games, he becomes the everyday left fielder. That forces Van Wagenen to try and deal Jed Lowrie to open up third base for JD Davis while Beltran would be presented with the tough decision of moving Robinson Cano to a utility role to give Jeff McNeil a full-time role at second base.

That is, if the Mets decide to keep Cespedes. Anthony DiComo of MLB.com noted that the Mets have had preliminary talks about dealing the veteran, though nothing is imminent at the moment.

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Morris talk, Miller arrival sparking hope for Knicks

There is still a long way to go toward legitimacy, but there is suddenly hope for the Knicks.



JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

Before we get into it, let's get this out of the way now: the Knicks still aren't a good basketball team.

But they are playing an awful lot better since the firing of David Fizdale.

That doesn't excuse the fact that the two-decade ownership of James Dolan has been nothing short of an utter failure or that Steve Mills' constant presence within the organization remains mystifying.

But they might have stumbled upon something in interim head coach Mike Miller.

Still, that doesn't excuse the fact that the Knicks are fundamentally broken and need a massive reboot to most of its personnel, both on and off the court.

But the veteran forward, Marcus Morris, might have helped light a fire under the bellies of the current roster just as Fizdale was shown the door.

Yes, Knicks fans are facing quite a conundrum right now.

Just hours before the Knicks decided to change head coaches on Dec. 6, Morris called a players-only meeting where he



Knicks interim head coach Mike Miller. GETTY IMAGES

stressed accountability, calling out the likes of Julius Randle and rookie RJ Barrett.

The Knicks had just lost by 37 to the Denver Nuggets the night before and Morris — who is having a career year — had enough.

"I was on the fence but I had to stick my neck out there. I wasn't really worried about guys' emotions," Morris said (h/t Stefan Bondy, NY Daily News). "The biggest thing I said is that we are all grown men, this is the league and we have a job to do. And we weren't really doing our job at the time."

Shortly after, Fizdale was shown the door and Miller, an assistant, was allowed to show just what he could do with an inexperienced and under-achieving roster.

The 55-year-old has cut his teeth in college basketball before a four-year stint with the Knicks' G-League affiliate in Westchester.

He knows how to develop young players and he knows how to stay even-keeled throughout the process.

That's vital when the core of the roster is 22 years old or younger (Barrett, Kevin Knox, Mitchell Robinson, Frank Ntilikina, Dennis Smith Jr.).

The early returns have been fantastic, especially by the Knicks' standards, as the team is 3-3 since Morris' team talk and Miller's takeover.

New York picked up its seventh win of the season on Tuesday in a 143-120 rout of the Atlanta Hawks.

It was the best performance of the season — albeit, against a lowly Atlanta side — as the triumph featured single-game career-bests for Barrett (27 points) and Robinson (22). Knox, 20, also added 17 of his own.

It was also the first true glimpse of a young trio that could be the foundation for competitive Knicks teams in the future.

Does that mean playoff contention is coming this year?

No, but with the right coaching and a little bit of help from competent management (whoever that might be), there is hope for the Knicks yet.



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WILMINGTON SAVINGS FUND SOCIETY, FSB, AS TRUSTEE FOR UPLAND MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST A, Plaintiff against KAZI HELAL, et al Defendant(s). Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered on May 24, 2019, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Queens County Supreme Courthouse, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Court Room # 25, Jamaica, N.Y. on the 24th day of January, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. premises described as follows: All that certain plot, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and being in the Borough and County of Queens, City and State of New York. Said premises known as 32-01 77th Street, Flushing, N.Y. 11370. (Block: 1173, Lot: 1). Approximate amount of lien \$ 447,749.58 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment and terms of sale. Index No. 705586-13. Lucille S. Digirolomo, Esq., Referee. FEIN SUCH & CRANE, LLP Attorney(s) for Plaintiff 28 East Main Street, Suite 1800 Rochester, N.Y. 14614 (585) 232-7400

NOTICE OF SALE

SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF QUEENS JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association, Plaintiff AGAINST Ruth Rivera a/k/a Ruth N. Rivera; Luis Munoz a/k/a Luis A. Munoz a/k/a Luis Munos; Wilfredo Rivera a/k/a Wilfredo Rivera-Lopez; et al., Defendant(s) Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly dated January 2, 2019, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Queens County Supreme Courthouse, Courtroom #25, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, New York on January 10, 2020 at 10:30AM, premises known as 933 Orono Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385. All that certain plot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements erected, situate, lying and being in the Borough and County of Queens, City and State of NY, Block: 3475 Lot: 38. Approximate amount of judgment \$704,371.91 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index# 707185/2014 Jerome Patterson, Esq., Referee Shapiro, DiCaro & Barak, LLC Attorney(s) for the Plaintiff 175 Mile Crossing Boulevard Rochester, New York 14624 (877) 430-4792 Dated: December 4, 2019 For sale information, please visit www.Auction.com or call (800) 280-2832



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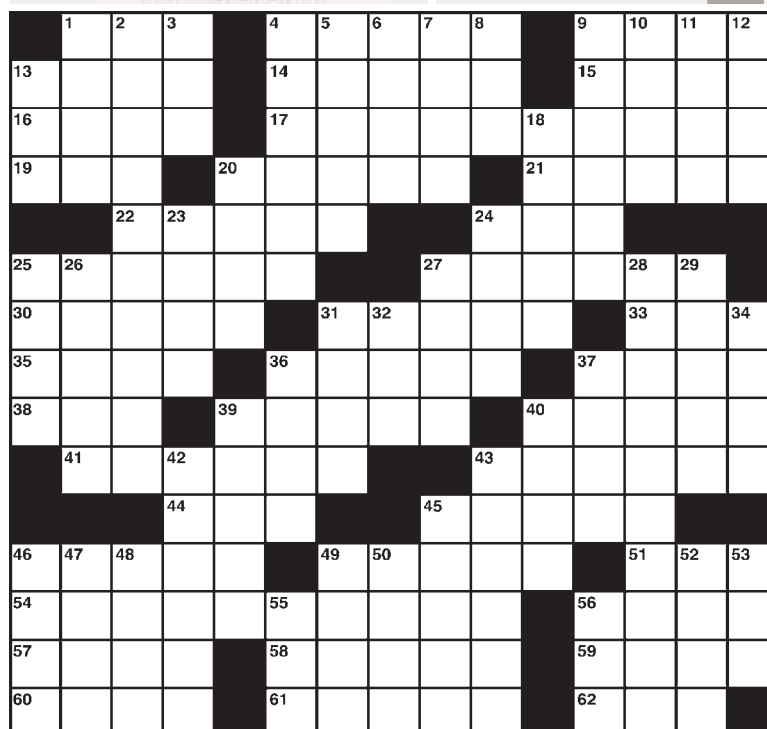
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2 Faux
3 Positive reply
4 "Tosca" & "Carmen"
5 Crates
6 Great place to ski
7 One of the planets
8 "Roses ___ red, violets..."
9 Magazine editions
10 Skinny
11 Chef
12 Roosters' mates
13 Many a tax preparer, for short
18 Utter
20 Refuse to admit
23 Pencil's core
24 Computer tech, often
25 Actor West
26 Embankment
27 Charges
28 Jubilantly victorious
29 Seasons at the table
31 Elated
32 Elected official: abbr.
34 Stratagem
36 Murdered
37 Prune, before it's dried
39 Violent weather
40 Theater event
42 Reluctant; unwilling
43 Elegant
45 Fish basket
46 Uncapped
47 Bangkok native
48 "___! The Herald Angels Sing"
49 "Take a hike!"
50 Pocket bread
52 Eerie sightings, for short
53 ___ it; understand
55 Parisian pal
56 Word before lift or boots

Sudoku on page 11

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